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Joint written statement* submitted by the Union of Arab Jurists, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, the General Arab Women Federation, Indian Movement "Tupaj Amaru", International Volunteerism Organization for Women, Education and Development - VIDES, Arab Lawyers Union, Arab Organization for Human Rights, Nord-Sud XXI - North-South XXI, Organisation Mondiale des associations pour l'éducation prénatale, Organisation pour la Communication en Afrique et de Promotion de la Cooperation Economique Internationale - OCAPROCE Internationale, United Towns Agency for North-South Cooperation, non-governmental organizations in special consultative status, Indian Council of South America (CISA), International Educational Development, Inc., International Human Rights Association of American Minorities (IHRAAM), World Peace Council, non-governmental organizations on the roster

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[19 February 2014]

* This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

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Human rights violations under anti-terrorism measures in Iraq

Although terrorism in itself is a serious challenge to any society and should be dealt with proactively, but using countering terrorism measures as justification for human rights violations has been sadly proven at the example of Iraq.

Since the US-invasion in 2003 ethnic tension and sectarianism have become a major element in Iraqi politics, a polarization the country had never known before[1]. Inside a systematically dismantled judicial system arbitrary arrest, denial of due process, torture and mistreatment have become the norm rather than the exception and execution rates have risen to record heights. Military forces target civilians in mass campaigns of arbitrary arrests, torture and abuse in prisons is widespread and mass executions occur on a regular scale.

The already tensed situation escalated at the turn of the year 2013/2014 with a military operation undertaken by the Iraqi government under the pretext of combating al-Qaeda in the province of al-Anbar, resulting in a humanitarian disaster. According to UN figures in February 2014, more than 300,000 people have been forcibly displaced[2]. The full casualty numbers from these last four weeks are not known, though on 30 January the UN Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI) reported that in the preceding three weeks, hospitals in Fallujah and Ramadi had reported 126 deaths and 666 injuries[3].

Implemented sectarianism

The terrible escalation of violence in Iraq can only be understood against the background of the profound destabilization of the country after the US-invasion and occupation in 2003, which found its continuation in the sectarian policy of the Iraqi government. Sectarianism is a form of discrimination which conquers by fuelling hatred between groups. It was deliberately implemented under occupation in order to weaken the country and create a divide.

Iraq thus had its infrastructure and institutions completely dismantled and rebuilt on political and sectarian lines. The former diverse army that had included all ethnic and religious groups was dissolved in favor of a militia-based structure[4]. The discriminate de-Ba'athification process and the entrenching of sectarian politics then created the possibility for Iran to expand its influence.[5] According to the former United Nations humanitarian coordinator in Iraq Denis Halliday, the sectarian divisions created in Iraq under occupation thus had the tragic result that the strife between religious interests in Iraq became "dangerous and life-threatening calamitous" to the entire region[6].

The responsibility for the deterioration of the situation is also on the shoulders of the Iraqi government. Prior to his meeting with US President Barack Obama on 1 November 2013 a group of several key US senators wrote candidly to President Obama and accused the Iraqi PM blame of being responsible for the sharp increase in sectarian violence in

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[1] See: *Iraq and the Betrayal of a People* – Impunity Forever? Dr. Hans-C. Graf Sponeck, at: Iraq, the Forgotten People, GICJ/2013.

[2] - More hardship, displacement as fighting continues in Iraq's Anbar province – UN
http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47117&Cr=iraq&Cr1=#.Uv0F6liYaUk

[3] Old fault lines, new flashpoints in Iraq's Anbar, Louise Redvers, 9 February 2014
http://www.uruknet.de/?p=m104766&hd=&size=1&l=e

[4] Iraq's current military and security forces are made of former Chalabi-led Iraq National Congress militiamen, Iran-based Badr militia, Mahdi Army militia and other sectarian based militias.
Iraq's real problem: A US occupation legacy of sectarian politics, by Mohammad Alomari
http://www.juancole.com/2014/01/occupation-sectarian-politics.html

[5] The National, January 25, 2014: Iraq's sectarian war threatens the Middle East.
http://www.thenational.ae/thenationalconversation/editorial/iraqs-sectarian-war-threatens-the-middle-east

[6] Global Research: US Occupation of Iraq is the Cause of Sectarian Strife and Al Qaeda Attacks
http://www.globalresearch.ca/us-occupation-of-iraq-is-the-cause-of-sectarian-strife-and-al-qaeda-attacks/5363956

Iraq:[7] "Unfortunately, al-Maliki's mismanagement of Iraqi politics is contributing to the recent surge of violence", they stated. By too often pursuing a sectarian and authoritarian agenda, they further explained, that the Prime Minister and his allies are isolating those with a democratic, inclusive, and pluralistic vision for their country.[8] The US senators urged Barack Obama to make clear to the Iraqi PM that "the extent of Iran's malign influence in the Iraqi government is a serious problem in bilateral relationship[9]".

Background of protest in al-Anbar

Since December 2012, many peaceful protests have been organized throughout Iraq against the sectarian policy and continuing human rights violations committed by the Iraqi government. Instead of negotiating the legitimate demands of the protesters, the government conducted a brutal crackdown on the protests, the brutality increasing gradually with time[10]. Mass campaigns of arbitrary arrests became the rule rather than the exception, execution rates rose to record levels, next to an alarmingly increasing number of target killings of opposition leaders. Very soon it became clear, that the proclaimed "fight against terrorism" was mainly aimed against political opponents.

In order to have an official justification to act against the uprisings the Iraqi government thus declared protest camps as infiltrated by terrorists even if such claims never proved to be true.

Escalation in the province of al-Anbar

On 22nd of December 2013, army troops launched an operation in the desert of Anbar, where some Al-Qaeda camps are said to be located in the desert[11].

On the 27 of December, government forces surrounded al-Ramadi. According to the Iraqi government 36 al-Qaeda members were hiding among the protestors inside the city, a claim that was totally rejected by the demonstrators, who offered that government troops may come and search. Nevertheless the situation escalated on 28 December 2013, when the Iraqi PM ordered the arrest of MP and Chair of the Iraqi Parliament's Economics committee Dr Ahmad Al-Alwani[12], During the assault the MP's brother and his wife were killed, next to five others of his staff. Two days later, the protest camp at Ramadi was cleared, although the demonstrators had offered to end their protests in exchange for Dr

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[7] Al-Maliki under fire for stoking sectarian rift
http://www.arabnews.com/news/471621

[8] CNN news: Obama, al-Maliki to address Iraq's violence spike at White House meeting
http://edition.cnn.com/2013/11/01/politics/obama-al-maliki-meeting/

[9] "We urge you to make clear to Prime Minister Maliki that the extent of Iran's malign influence in the Iraqi government is a serious problem in our bilateral relationship, especially for the Congress. Published reports demonstrate that the Iranian regime uses Iraqi airspace to transit military assistance into Syria to support Assad and his forces. Furthermore, attacks against the residents of Camp Ashraf in Iraq are reprehensible, especially because the Iraqi government pledged to protect these people. Prime Minister Maliki must understand that actions such as these need to stop. Not only do they make it difficult for Iraq's friends in the United States to build public support, especially in the Congress, to enhance our strategic partnership, but they also undermine Iraq's standing as a responsible member of the international community."

[10] Government War Crimes in Anbar Province: Fallujah as Example, by: Conservation Center of Environmental & Reserves in Fallujah (CCERF), Government War Crimes in Anbar Province, Fallujah as Example. February 2014
http://www.brussellstribunal.org/article_view.asp?id=1402#.UvYjRvl5N8E

[11] During the raid on a supposed al-Qaeda den about 420 km west of al-Ramadi the commander of the 7th division of the Iraqi Army and 15 other were killed. General al-Karawi had been the commander of the Brigade that stormed the protest square in Hawija on April 2013, leaving at least 200 protesters dead and wounded. Now the Iraqi government publicly vowed against the protesters, claiming that they were not just a place for recruiting terrorists, but for sheltering them too: See, Arab Center for Research and Policy studies: Maliki's Policies: The Quest for Salvation at Iraq's Expense
http://english.dohainstitute.org/release/05adf2f2-29bc-4b67-a115-b37a0476b365

[12] - Also considered by many as a leading member of the protest movement and one of the key critics of the Iranian meddling in Iraq.

Ahmad Al-Alwani's release. When no terrorists were found the Iraqi government casually suggested that the terrorists had probably "escaped".

In the wake of January 1, 2014 the 600.000 residents of Fallujah, where protests had regularly taken place, found themselves encircled by government forces. Residential areas came under attack with mortar fire and gunfire. This time it was claimed that Al Qaeda and ISIL had taken over the city. Indeed some fighters wearing such signs were seen, yet these people encountered strong resistance from the residents of Fallujah, who wondered how these infiltrators could enter and leave the city in modern army vehicles despite the siege by the army.

Several times the Iraqi PM came out on TV inciting his followers with sectarian language to support him at all means in his fight against the inhabitants of the al-Anbar province describing them as "terrorists". In view of the discriminatory attacks by government forces and their well-known brutality the residents then decided to defend themselves. It is therefore important to understand that those residents who are presented as terrorists are defending themselves out of fear against Maliki's forces and that they are ordinary citizens, in no way affiliated to any terrorist group.

Military support

The Iraqi PM's official portrayal of terrorists brought him the immediate support from the USA as well as from Iran and Russia. On 23rd January Iraq requested five hundred Hellfires, costing $82 million[13]. (Such spending is a travesty in a country where electricity, clean water, education and health services have all but collapsed.) End January 2014 an American cargo jet loaded with weapons including 2,400 rockets to arm Iraqi attack helicopters arrived in Baghdad. A contract was agreed to sell a further twenty four AH-64E attack helicopters. This comes on top of a delivery of a first shipment in November 2013 of highly advanced Mi-35 attack helicopters as part of a $4.3 Billion arms purchase from Russia and seventy five Hellfire missiles rushed to Baghdad in mid-December 2013. [14]

Supporters of the Iraqi government overheard warnings by the senior EU lawmaker Struan Stevenson, a member of the European parliament who chairs the European Parliament's Delegation for Relations with Iraq, who in January 2014 warned that "Iraq is plummeting rapidly towards civil war and genocide"[15]. He stated that the onslaught against supposed Al Qaeda terrorists in 6 Iraqi Provinces is no more than a cover for the annihilation of those parties opposed to the increasingly sectarian policies of the Iraqi Prime Minister. Stevenson's further warned that claims by the Iraqi PM were "utter nonsense". Still, he had convinced his allies that "he is fighting a war on terror and they are pouring in rockets, drones and other military hardware" which he is "using to bomb and kill civilian targets"[16].

Ongoing attacks against civilians

At the writing of this report in February 2014 the people in the province of al-Anbar are still under attack. The indiscriminate violence by government forces has turned into lynching and terror which resulted in the death of over hundred civilians and the displacement of more than 300.000[17].

Hospitals and schools have been damaged due to the heavy shelling and many families have been displaced several times because of new attacks in their place of refuge[18]. The brutality is totally out of proportion and in contravention to Geneva Conventions[19].

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[13] Small change compared to the $14 Billion in weapons provided by America since 2005

[14] *Iraq: 935 Lies, A Tyrant and Weapons of Mass Destruction*
Felicity Arbuthnot, 02-02-2014, http://www.brusselstribunal.org/article_view.asp?id=1389#.UvT4yfl5N8F

[15] http://www.struanstevenson.com/media/news-release/genocide_of_iraqs_sunni_population_likely_warns_scots_mep/

[16] http://www.struanstevenson.com/media/news-release/senior_euro_mp_attacks_genocidal_campaign_of_iraqi_prime_minister_nouri_al-/

[17] Old fault lines, new flashpoints in Iraq's Anbar, Louise Redvers, 9 February 2014
http://www.uruknet.de/?p=m104766&hd=&size=1&l=e

(COIN), Code Pink, the Iraqi Association for Human Rights (IAHR), Al-Basa'er Media Association, Consumers for Peace.org, Dhafir Trial.org, DC Anti-War Network.org, Democracy Action, Democracy for America Meetup (Birmingham, AL), Olympia Citizens' Movement to Impeach Bush/Cheney (WA), One Million Reasons, Operation Cease Fire, Operation Impeachment, Orange County Grassroots (CA), Out of Iraq, Out of Iraq Bloggers Caucus, Patrick Henry Democratic Club, Patriotic Pulse, Patriots for Gore, Peace Action, Peace Action Wisconsin, Peace and Accountability, Peace Drum, Peace Majority, Peace Movement Aotearoa (New Zealand), Peace Reso.org, Peninsula Peace and Justice Center (Palo Alto, CA), People's Campaign for the Constitution, People Powered Impeachment, People's Email Network, People's Glorious Five Year Plan, Picnic to Impeach, Pixel4Peace.org, Playing in Traffic, PledgeToImpeach.org, Political Cooperative, Politics and Art, Progressive Action Alliance, Progressive Action Center, Progressive Avenues, Progressive Democrats of America, Progressive Democrats of Hawaii Project Filibuster, Project for the OLD American Century, Refusing to Kill.org, Rescue Our Democracy, Sacramento for Democracy (CA), St Pete for Peace (FL), Sampsonia Way, San Diego for Democracy, School of the Americas Watch, Sheehan for Congress, South Florida Impeachment Coalition, South Mountain Peace Action (Maplewood & South Orange, NJ), Springs Action Alliance (CO), Stop the War Coalition (UK), Students for Impeachment, Students Towards a New Direction (STAND), Summit County Progressive Democrats (OH), The Known UnKnowns, The Politically Incorrect Cabaret, The Rational Response Squad, Think Blue Dems, Time for Accountability, Toronto Coalition to Stop the War (Canada), Torture Abolition and Survivors Support Coalition International, True Blue Liberal.org, Trumansburg Impeachment (NY), Truth Empowered, Truthtelling Project, UC Nuclear, Underground Action Alliance, Unitarian Universalist Peace and Justice Group (Nantucket, MA), United Blue USA, United for Veterans (Wayne, MI), United Progressives, Upbeat Defiance, US Peace Memorial, US Tour of Duty: Iraq Veterans and Military Families Demand the Truth, Velvet Revolution, Vet Gulf March, Veteran Intelligence Professionals for Sanity, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 27, Virginia Grassroots Coalition, Voters for Peace, We the People for Peace, We the People Network, We the People Now, We The People United Bangladesh.org, Peace Surge, Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane (WA), Stop the War (UK), U.S. Peace Council, World Can't Wait.org, World Prout Assembly, Komite Internazionalista- Basque, Asociación Paz, Igualdad y Solidaridad Internacional, Arab Cause Solidarity Committee, Iraq Solidarity Association in Stockholm, Málaga, Spain, Stop Fascism Action Network, The Asian Jurists Centre, Association of Human Rights Defenders in Iraq (AHRDI), The African Center for Human Rights (ACHR), Veterans for Peace, Your Declaration of Independence.org , Arab Lawyers Network-UK, Conservative Centre of Environmental & Reserves in Fallujah (CCERF), Willie Nelson Peace Research Institute, Studies Centre for Human Rights and Democracy, The Iraqi Centre for Human Rights, Association internationale des droits de l'homme, NGO(s) without consultative status, also share the views expressed in this statement.